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A colourful Mother's Day weekend

GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Pelham Art Festival drew crowds to the town's arena on the Mother's Day weekend. See story and photos on page 2.

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UPFRONT

■ **CULTURE CLUB:** Annual Mother's Day weekend event supports library, scholarship and local arts

PHOTOS BY **GREG FURMINGER**/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Paintings, pottery sculpture and other beautiful creations fill Pelham's arena for the Mother's Day weekend Pelham Art Festival.

Pelham Art Festival drew crowds to the town's arena on the Mother's Day weekend, for both an appreciation of talent and to support the local library system.

Art festival draws a crowd

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

Lynne O'Connor has been to the premier art galleries of Europe, including the Louvre in Paris, and says Ontario has talent comparable to some of the great artists she's seen across the Atlantic.

The Toronto woman returned to Fonthill last weekend for another opportunity to take in the Pelham Art Festival, where more than 70 artists assembled to showcase and sell their paintings, sculptures, jewelry and other artistry.

"Some of them are as good as the masters you see," said O'Connor, who was with her friend Heather Northgrave of Fonthill simply to take in the colours and textures that filled Pelham Arena for the Mother's Day weekend.

"I like (art with) doors and windows," said Northgrave. "I think it's about the possibility of what's beyond them."

For all who filed in to the three-door show, there was perhaps something to cater to every personal taste.

"There's a lot of new pieces, new artists and returning artists as well," said Heidi TeBrake, who has chaired the festival for the past eight years and been a member of volunteer committees for more than a quarter century.

"Wonderful" is how she described all participating artists, many of them who, like visitors, kept cool from unseasonably hot, humid conditions in the arena by fanning themselves with the festival program guide.

Among newcomer artists was Hamilton's Shu-Chen Cheng, who specializes in raku, which originated in Japan but has evolved into a westernized style of pottery firing that when complete has a metallic glaze effect.

Cheng also does horse hair raku, which creates a surface effect by burning the hair onto the pottery.

"It's a very lengthy process, and it doesn't always work out," she said with a smile.

Word of mouth is what brought her to Pelham.

"Quite a few people I know do this show, and they said it was well organized," she said. "It's always good for me to reach a new audience."

Pelham Art Festival over its past 29 years has been able to provide funding for the local library.

Again this year, $10,000 was donated, bringing the event's contribution to more than $375,000 over the years, TeBrake said.

The festival also supports an arts scholarship for a graduating E.L. Crossley Secondary School student, plus other local arts projects.

Artists exhibiting on the weekend were from across Ontario, a complement to Pelham's own rich arts community.

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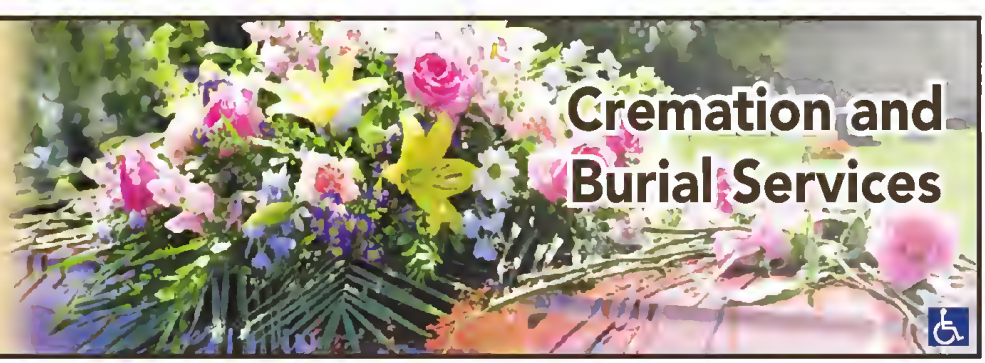

LOCALNEWS

■ SECOND WORLD WAR

Pelham mayor witness to history

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

What began as a family vacation turned into a heartfelt history lesson for Dave Augustyn.

The Pelham mayor and his family decided in the fall to book a European excursion, unaware of the monumental period during which they would be travelling.

But as their departure date grew closer, they learned their presence in the Netherlands in early May would allow them to be a part of history.

Last week the family attended the Liberation Day ceremony including a large parade in Wageningen, Netherlands. The day celebrated liberation of that nation 70 years ago to the day and paid tribute to the Canadian soldiers who fought during the Second World War to bring freedom to the country.

"It was amazing," Augustyn said by phone of the experience, shortly after arriving in London, England.

"The crowds were applauding the veterans as they went by, many of them Canadians," he said.

It evoked an immense sense of pride while also giving Augustyn a close look at what he called "the appreciation the people have for vets for liberating their country."

Augustyn was proud to witness fellow Niagaran Jim Summersides participate in the procession.

Recently awarded a Congressional Gold Medal for his efforts in the Second World War, Summersides was a member the 1st Special Service Force, dubbed by opposing German troops the Devil's Brigade.

The celebration was like no other Augustyn had experienced before, giving him a new appreciation of what freedom truly is.

"Freedom is something you celebrate together," he said.

Augustyn was also present to witness the reburial ceremony of Pte. Albert Laubenstein in the Canadian War Cemetery at Bergen op Zoom.

The remains of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment soldier were discovered recently, 70 years after he was killed during a five-day battle in the Netherlands.

On Wednesday, Laubenstein was given a proper military funeral with full honours, with members of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment in attendance.

The battle of Kapelsche Veer cost the regiment more than 130 casualties, including Pte. Laubenstein. Due to the muddy terrain and fierce nature of the fighting, the bodies of many of those killed were never found.

It was difficult for Augustyn to put into words the experience of stepping into the war cemetery.

"To see the names of so many Canadian soldiers who sacrificed ..." he said, trailing off.

He was moved by seeing not only that sacrifice firsthand, but also the way that sacrifice is honoured by others in the Netherlands.

In total, 1,350 Canadian soldiers died liberating the nation during the war.

Before returning to Canada in a few days, Augustyn's family intends to participate in the VE Day (Victory in Europe) celebration, set to get underway in London Friday afternoon.

The celebration marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe.

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SUPPLIED PHOTOS

The reburial ceremony for Pte. Albert Laubenstein was held Wednesday in the Canadian War Cemetery at Bergen op Zoom.

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■ COLUMN

Moving forward on mental health

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

It's one of those press releases that most reporters groan at: The government announcing it's doing a study to develop guidelines to deal with one issue or another.

Boring right? I mean, if there is something Canadian governments are expert at, it's hiring people to study problems which usually result in less action than we saw in the Floyd Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao super fight.

But the press release about Queen's Park developing guidelines to help hospitals treat patients at risk for suicide did grab my attention. They tasked one Dr. Ian Dawe, a mental health expert, to lead a task force to establish guidelines.

I take any promise by any government to actually do something with a big bag of salt. I generally prefer to expect the worst because that way there is always a chance I will be pleasantly surprised.

So it's not the promise here that interests me in this case, but the attitude underpinning it.

The fact is this sort of press release could not have been written a few years ago.

It hasn't been easy to talk about mental health publicly. For a long time it was something best left in a closet.

That is changing and the press release bespeaks how much the ground has shifted.

Where once mental health was a taboo issue, now there are wildly successful "break the stigma" social media campaigns and fundraisers. I read there was even a big time, fancy pants gala event in Ottawa last week dedicated specifically to mental health.

As hard as it was, and sometimes still is, to talk about mental health openly, a discussion about suicide was even more difficult.

And the press was complicit in creating a cone of silence around it. I mean, how could society confront an issue when even the news media refused to face it?

When I started in this racket, the rules around covering suicides could be summed up in a simple sentence: you don't write about it.

There was an idea without much basis in fact — which you still find kicking around some newsrooms — that said if you wrote about suicide you would create more suicides.

The old rules even said you could not write anything positive about someone who died because, apparently, that would make other people want to kill themselves.

These irrational restrictions kept the issue out of sight, out of mind and off the political front burner.

That is why when I sat down with Erica Bajer a few years ago — then a reporter, now my managing editor — to do a series on suicide and mental health in Niagara, we very consciously decided to abandon the old rules in favour of an approach that was responsible but wasn't afraid to face reality: Mental health issues are serious, suicide is all too often a consequence of them, and real people suffer.

Now, finally, we have a government that wants to build guidelines specifically aimed at at-risk patients.

It's part of a transformation of our mental health system that Pathstone Mental Health CEO Ellis Katsof was telling me about earlier last week — that Ontario is building a comprehensive system of care that will apply to all patients wherever they happen to live.

The very fact that Queen's Park is calling for suicide guidelines shows how far we've come on this front.

That said, words aren't enough. Ultimately the guidelines have to reflect best practice and current scientific data and, most importantly, improve patient care. But we can at least take heart in the fact that after years in the dark, mental health issues have become a real priority.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Erviken is shown in this undated photo on Superior, Wisc., courtesy of the Matt Miner Collection.

Shipwrecks – Erviken

SKIP GILLHAM
For Postmedia Network

Erviken was a Norwegian freighter that had been launched at Fredrikstad, Norway, on Oct. 7, 1950, and completed before the end of the year.

It kept busy on saltwater routes but, when the St. Lawrence Seaway opened in 1959, the 118.3-metre-long-by-17.5-metre-wide carrier could now come to the Great Lakes.

The vessel made a single voyage inland in 1959 and returned to our shores during the next three years making a total of seven seaway transits to the end of 1962.

Sold and renamed *Gracia* in 1963, it operated under the flag of Finland until becoming *Pennyco*, Liberian registry, in 1967. The final name of *Kiki* was applied in 1970 when the ship joined the Kiki Shipping Co. Ltd. of Cyprus in 1970.

What proved to be the final voyage of the then-22-year old carrier began by loading coke at Gdynia, Poland, early in 1971. The crew set out for Dugi Rat, Yugoslavia, but they never arrived.

In the early hours of Feb. 3, 1971, the former seaway visitor simply disappeared. It was believed to have gone down in the western Mediterranean shortly after passing through the Straits of Gibraltar. All 27 sailors on board were lost without a trace.

AUTO RACING: Now that she has a full driver's licence, 17-year-old from Fonthill hopes to become a better racer 'over the long run'

A licence to pick up points

BERND FRANKE
Postmedia Network

Karen Kocarik received an early Mother's Day gift last Saturday night at Merrittville Speedway.

Along with husband Kevin, the racing mom got to bask in the glow of their daughter Kourtney's happiness of qualifying for the mini stocks feature and then going the distance in the 20-lap feature.

The 36 points the youngest of the Fonthill couple's two racing children picked for a middle-of-the-pack finish also put a smile on Karen's face as did seeing her daughter finish the race safe and sound.

Though her husband raced street stocks for 20 years and her eldest, son Kameron, for three years, Karen, a racer in her own right when she competed in "ladies races," still can't help but worry when her daughter gets behind the wheel.

"I still worry just a little. You can't help it when it's your own kid," she said.

Surprisingly, cause for concern is greatest when 17-year-old Kourtney, street legal since getting her full licence a week ago Friday, drives on the avenues, roads and streets of Niagara, not on the dirt tracks at Merrittville and New Humberstone speedways.

"They both have their moments of anxiety followed by moments when you can relax, but when she's racing, I don't worry as much," Karen said with a chuckle.

"Here, her car has a rollbar, she's wearing a racing suit and she's strapped into a 5-point harness."

Mom also pointed out that racers know what they're doing — "and where they're going" — and that safety is paramount at the Thorold track.

"They run an excellent track here."

For Kourtney, the lessons that safety always trumps speed began leaving a lasting impression eight years ago when she became involved in Merrittville's go-kart program.

"Go-karts give you an idea of how racing works, what all the flags mean," said Kourtney, a Grade 12 student at Notre Dame College School in Welland.

Kevin, who doubles as his daughter's pit crew on race nights, credited karting with putting Kourtney in a position to race safely and with confidence.

"I don't worry about her. She was taught the protocol, she knows what racing is all about," said Kevin, who also enrolled Kameron, now 20 and attending University of Waterloo, in Merrittville's karting program.

Kourtney is now in her fourth year racing the No. 3K Mustang in Merrittville's 4-cylinder class. Aside from rolling the car in her fourth-ever race and flipping it after making contact two years ago, her mini stocks career has been injury-free.

"I pulled some muscles in my shoulder when the car flipped, but I was back the next week."

Since graduating from go karts, her racing resume has yet to feature a victory, but the racer, while disappointed that she has yet to master the turns on Merrittville's D-shaped track, isn't in a rush to get into victory lane.

"I know right now I'm not good enough to be at the top. I have to wait, it's not my time yet. I need more experience."

A young woman who raced cars at tracks in Niagara two years before she was old enough to drive to the tracks, Kourtney thinks driving on the street "over the long run" will help her become a better racer when it comes to turning into corners.

"It's given me techniques you have to act like there is an egg under your foot," she said of qualifying for her full licence.

"If you go nice and slow, you'll gain momentum and speed getting out of the corners. I know it sounds wrong, but it works."

Despite a long string of also-ran finishes, Kourtney Kocarik is more likely to graduate to the 8-cylinder Hoosier class than she is leave racing in frustration.

"The adrenalin you get while you're out there, it's pretty fun," said the daughter, flashing a Mother's Day smile.

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BERND FRANKE/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Kourtney Kocarik, No. 3, rounds a corner in 4-cyclinder qualifying at Merrittville Speedway on Saturday in Thorold.

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POLITICS: Hudak makes few remarks via Twitter

New Tory leader lacked full support of Niagara ridings

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

Patrick Brown is the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's new leader — but not all ridings in Niagara threw their support behind the man.

The 36-year-old lawyer, a lifelong resident of Barrie, has served as a Tory MP since 2006. He handily defeated his main rival Christine Elliott during Saturday's party election in Toronto.

But he didn't have the Niagara Falls riding in his corner.

Election results released by the party showed Elliott, who on May 2 made a campaign stop in Fort Erie for an event with MP Rob Nicholson, won the Niagara Falls riding with 57 of its 100 electoral points. Brown received 43.

Brown did have overwhelming support in Niagara's other three ridings, the electoral point breakdown shows.

He won 70-30 in St. Catharines, 68-32 in Welland and 64-36 in Niagara West–Glanbrook, the riding held by former party leader and sitting MPP Tim Hudak.

Hudak stepped down as leader after the Tories' election defeat last June.

He could not be reached for comment on the weekend, but was present for Saturday's vote.

"Congratulations to @brownbarrie and his outreach success. Looking forward to his leadership of PCs, his energy, and expanding the party," Hudak posted on his Twitter feed.

He also tweeted: "Thank you to @chriselliottpc for running a hard fought campaign, standing for her values & for her goal to strengthen our Party & Province;

"Thanks to @jwilsonmpp for his leadership as PC Interim leader. Proud to have seen his love for the Province and the Party on display daily;

"Thanks to @MonteMcNaughton, @MacLeodLisa and @VicFedeliMPP for the energy & ideas they brought to the leadership race."

VERONICA HENRI/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara West–Glanbrook MPP Tim Hudak with his child, Maitland, on his lap at Saturday's Conservative party leadership election in Toronto with former premiers Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

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Deputy Treasurer

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LOCALNEWS

■ **GET DOWN AND DIRTY:** slip, slide, climb and crawl

Pelham Mudfest returns to Bissell's Hideaway

FRANKI IKEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Frank Adamson, president elect for the Rotary Club of Fonthill, climbs one of the obstacle courses for the upcoming Pelham Mudfest at Bissell's Hideaway in Pelham.

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

They will slip, they will slide, they will climb and they will crawl through six kilometres of terrain at Bissell's Hideaway on May 23.

Rotary Club of Fonthill's Pelham Mudfest is back with lots of brand new obstacles and ways to challenge participants.

President-elect of the Rotary club, Frank Adamson said the new obstacles in combination with the terrain at Bissel's makes it more challenging and more fun.

There are tarps to slide down hills, mud pits, ponds, walls to climb over, ropes to climb under and many more obstacles to keep people busy on course.

Mike Taylor, member of the Rotary Club of Fonthill, said the event is substantial for the club and one of its biggest fundraisers.

Taylor has participated in the past two Mudfests. He said the course was a challenge, but that it's a great way to get in some exercise, no matter your age or fitness level.

"There were others of us who were just happy to crawl across the finish line," he said.

Taylor also said that it's a chance for people to face some of their fears — referencing the 10- to 15-foot wall participants will be climbing over, which will be a challenge for those afraid of heights.

"There's something in it for anybody really," said Taylor.

Adamson said people should expect "fun, food, booze, a T-shirt, entertainment," at the Saturday event. More than 200 people have already registered and organizers are aiming to raise that to 300 by race day.

The registration fee is $75 dollars, and all proceeds go to End Polio Now and Wellspring Niagara. The Rotary club is also looking for corporate sponsors that are interested in sponsoring students so they can register for a discounted price of $25. Because of the obstacles, there is a minimum age restriction of 15.

Adamson said the Rotary club is grateful to Bissell's for allowing use of its grounds for the event and for helping with the setup of obstacles.

For more information and to register, visit www.pelhammudfest.ca.

franki.ikeman@sunmedia.ca
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■ CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK

Hair loss would benefit children's hospital

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

Attention Walmart shoppers: your help is needed to enable a couple of giggling young girls to lop the locks from the heads of three store employees.

Nine-year-old Alexandria Mercier of Fenwick and 10-year-old Hailey Wiley of Welland have both been receiving regular care from McMaster's Children's Hospital, and both have been invited to take part Saturday in a store fundraiser for the hospital-supporting Children's Miracle Network.

If the employees — Angela Redekop, Lisa McCrae and Loriann Briand — raise a collective $1,750 by then, all three will have their tresses reduced to stubble by the young girls inside the store at 11 a.m.

Redekop said this money is in addition to donations that cashiers are collecting at the checkout, where customers are invited to support Walmart's preferred charity and in exchange receive a paper donor balloon to be displayed in the store.

GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

McCrae said the CMN funding will help McMaster continue to afford state-of the-art medical equipment.

"I've been blessed with two healthy children — but you never know," she said of why she's willing to face the scissors.

Alexandria has been receiving care for scoliosis, and some day will require a permanent rod to align her spine. She now undergoes two surgeries a year at the Hamilton hospital.

Hospital boosters and donors play a "huge" role in her care, said mom Wendy Mercier.

Hailey's mom, Tara Wiley, agreed. Her daughter has a rare form of epilepsy that is being treated by experts at McMaster.

"They're not just there for the kids, they're there for us as well," she said.

People can donate towards the hair-losing campaign by calling Redekop at 905-735-5596 or by directing funds to the employees' effort at the store.

Since joining Children's Miracle Network in 1994, Walmart Canada has raised more than $50 million for the charity that supports local hospitals.

Walmart's balloon campaign is tied in with its annual signature event, the Walmart Walk for Miracles.

greg.furminger@sunmedia.ca
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Fourth Walmart to open in St. Catharines

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

A fourth Walmart store will open its doors in St. Catharines in the home of the former Target outlet at the Pen Centre shopping mall.

Walmart Canada announced it has purchased 12 former Target sites in Canada, including ones in Winnipeg, Guelph, Ottawa and Quebec City. It also bought a Target distribution centre.

The stores were bought for $165 million, according to a Walmart media release, and renovations to the outlets are expected to cost the company $185 million.

John Bragagnolo, general manager of The Pen Centre, said he has no knowledge yet about when the Walmart store will open.

"I found out about through the Walmart announcement the same as you did," he said. "All I know at this point is that Walmart has purchased the Target lease. We'll know more as things develop."

There has been no details yet on how many jobs the new Walmart will create, he said.

In its media release, Walmart Canada said the new stores are expected to create nearly 5,000 jobs, 1,500 of which are construction and trades positions.

Bragagnolo said shopping mall managers have to expect a degree of turnover in their facilities and new that in time, Target would be replaced by another store.

Niagara also has Walmart stores in Welland, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls.

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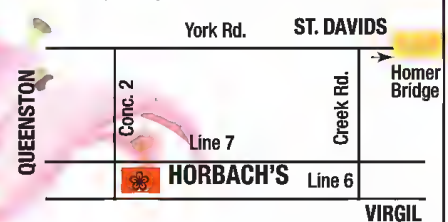

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■ PUBLIC SAFETY

Police body cams a complicated issue: privacy commissioner

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

Deciding to outfit police officers with body cameras is a more complicated issue than simply putting the camera on a uniform and hitting the On button, says Ontario's privacy commissioner.

"There are a number of privacy and security issues that have to be worked out," Brian Beamish said recently, after speaking on emerging trends surrounding privacy and digital information at Brock University.

"They are not insurmountable, but they do have to be figured out."

Beamish said while the advantage of having the cameras for transparency and accountability reasons is obvious, there are a number of details to be carefully mapped out.

"When are the cameras on? When are they not? Who has access to that information? How is that data stored? How will it be used?" he said.

"There are also circumstances where information about members of the public, which should be private, will be recorded. So you also have to deal with that."

Niagara Regional Police considered a body camera pilot project, following in the footsteps of the Toronto police service which has launched one.

However, the police services board recently voted to put a local study on hold. The issue was shuffled to the board's technology committee for review while the NRP waits for the results of the Toronto pilot project.

Beamish said most police services are watching the Toronto project closely before moving to put cameras on their officers.

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Fonthill woman wins big on RRRoll Up the Rim to Win

FRANKI IKEMAN/ POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Anna Havlin got the keys to her new Toyota Camry with on Friday May 8, 2015 in Pelham. Havlin won the car on a RRRoll Up the Rim to Win cup from Tim Hortons. Havlin says she was on a flight to Mexico when she made the wining roll and was in complete shock. "I couldn't believe it when I rolled up that rim. I was actually speechless, I didn't know what to say or what to do," she said.

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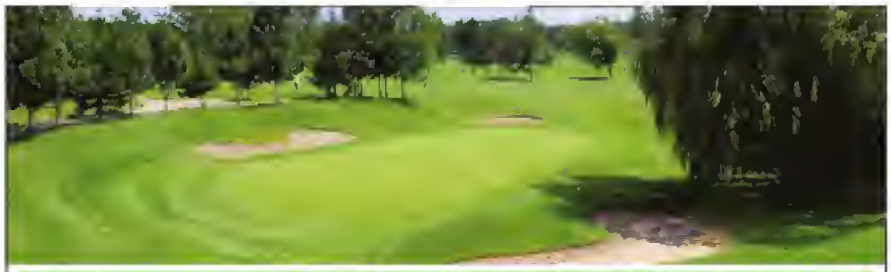

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■ FRIENDLY COMPETITION

Our cops are tops at police tug of war

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

Despite the white knuckles, gritted teeth and screams of pain, Niagara Regional Police were again crowned champions in a cross-border tug of war with their U.S. counterparts.

The spring tradition has been taking place at the centre of the Rainbow Bridge for the past 55 years.

Last Saturday afternoon, a team of 20 Niagara Regional Police officers squared off against 25 of their American counterparts from Niagara County Sheriff's Department and Niagara Falls, N.Y., Police Department.

Members of the public lined the bridge to show their support in what has become a friendly rivalry among the police forces.

"This event is a great camaraderie between the countries and it's a nice way for us to get together and that's something we don't get to do every day," said Roger Freeman, team co-captain and a lieutenant with the Niagara Falls, N.Y., police service.

"There's a great relationship between police on both sides of the border," NRP Const. Tony Mummery, captain of the Canuck team added. "All and all it was a great day."

While the mood is congenial between the officers, make no mistake, it was still a much heated competition.

The NRP team lost its first pull to the Americans, but all was not lost as it easily out muscled the U.S. team on the second and third pull.

"They did a great job coming back," said NRP Chief Jeff McGuire.

"That first pull drains the energy out of you, so be able to come back after that is a great accomplishment by the team."

The NRP has taken home the International Law Enforcement Tug of War trophy pretty well every year.

With Saturday's victory, the local team has won the event 51 times over the past 55 years.

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NOTICE

GM EMPLOYEE REFER A FRIEND PROGRAM

General Motors of Canada Limited is pleased to announce that for a **LIMITED TIME,** friends of GM employees, retirees and surviving spouses will be eligible to purchase under the **EMPLOYEE VEHICLE PURCHASE PROGRAM.**

Until **June 1, 2015**, all GM employees can sponsor a buyer to purchase a **NEW VEHICLE OF THEIR CHOICE.**
Each eligible employee can refer a limited number of friends during this offer.
Customers must take delivery of the vehicle by June 1, 2015 to be eligible.

THIS FIRST TIME OFFER WILL NO LONGER APPLY AFTER JUNE 1st, 2015.
THIS OFFER MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AGAIN
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